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Viewing cable 10SHANGHAI18, CLIMATE CHANGE/CHINA: SHANGHAI THINK-TANK DISCUSSES THE

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
10SHANGHAI18	2010-01-21 08:52	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Consulate Shanghai

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.aftenposten.no/spesial/wikileaksdokumenter/article4006892.ece>

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SHANGHAI 000018
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NSC FOR LOI
USDOE FOR INTERNATIONAL
STATE FOR SECC STERN
STATE ALSO FOR EAP/CM, EEB, OES/PCI, OES/EGC, AND OES/ENV
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TAGS: SENV PREL ENRG KGHC CH
SUBJECT: CLIMATE CHANGE/CHINA: SHANGHAI THINK-TANK DISCUSSES THE
DYNAMIC AT COPENHAGEN
REF: BEIJING 62
SHANGHAI 00000018 001.2 OF 003
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CLASSIFIED BY: Christopher J. Beede, Deputy Principal Officer,
U.S. Consulate General, Shanghai, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: The Copenhagen climate change conference exemplified a competition in the "game of global governance," with Europe's influence waning, and new dynamic between the developing countries (led by China), Europe and other developed countries, and the United States emerging; according to a senior researcher at a highly respected and influential Shanghai-based think-tank. While China's position had been clear going into the negotiations, others tried to deviate from the established multilateral accords and drive a wedge between large and small developing countries. The behavior of China's delegation at Copenhagen reflects not only a lack of coordination between the Foreign Ministry and National Development and Reform Commission, but also that China's internal decision-making process does not mesh with the fast-moving negotiating environment that characterized the Copenhagen discussions. END SUMMARY.

CHINA'S ROLE "POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE"

2. (SBU) In a January 6 meeting with Embassy Beijing Environment, Science, Technology, and Health Counselor Brent Christensen, [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTEPOSTEN] explained that the recent Copenhagen

climate change conference (UNFCCC COP 15) was an international platform where China, in contrast to the discussions surrounding the global financial crisis, was at center stage, as the largest developing economy and the largest emitter of greenhouse gases (GHGs). Despite this unaccustomed position, [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN] stressed that, going into the negotiations, China totally understood its role and obligations. Premier Wen Jiabao had outlined a position consistent with the outcomes of previous negotiations and the framework established by the previous UN-sponsored conferences since 1992.

13. (SBU) Based on the legacy of those agreements, [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN] asserted that China has played a positive and constructive role in the climate negotiations by maintaining cohesion among developing countries. China worked hard to bring about a consensus among developing countries, [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN] stated. He was optimistic that the agreement reached in Copenhagen, along with the previous texts, will serve as the "groundwork" for future negotiations, even though the Copenhagen agreement has "fallen short" of expectations.

COPENHAGEN: STRUGGLE OVER ROLES IN "GLOBAL GOVERNANCE"

14. (SBU) [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN] characterized the Copenhagen negotiations as a competition over roles in the emerging game of global governance. For the first time, he observed, European nations felt they might lose their "traditional supremacy." As an example, European nations were "furious" and humiliated over how President Obama had brokered a deal with the "BASIC" countries (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China) on the document which emerged from the Copenhagen conference. In [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN]'s view, the Copenhagen discussions had revealed a new three-way division within the international community on climate change. Instead of the traditional developed/developing country divide, the players were split among a bloc of developed countries led by the European Union, a developing country bloc including the Group of 77 (G-77) states and China, and -- by itself -- the United States.

15. (SBU) The Chinese position, [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN] emphasized, is that all countries have common but differentiated responsibilities to address climate change. Developed countries need to make "reparations" for their longstanding contribution to the problem SHANGHAI 00000018 002.2 OF 003 through legally binding obligations to reduce GHGs as well as to provide technology transfer and financial support to developing countries. [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN] said that, prior to the Copenhagen negotiations, China had clearly stated its bottom line of reducing carbon intensity by 40-45 percent, so it had nothing to conceal. China's only concession during the talks was more cooperation with international organizations on verification of compliance on reduction commitments. The Europeans, however, "played a lot of tricks" and took advantage of their "united front" to endeavor to push China to increase its carbon intensity reductions to an unacceptable level of 60 percent. [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN] said Premier Wen was quite angry that UK Prime Minister Brown had simply repeated European earlier demands on the 60 percent target.

CHINA OPPOSES DEVELOPED COUNTRY "WEDGE TACTICS"

16. (SBU) According to [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN], Europe and, to a certain extent, the developed countries as a whole had tried to create "a new track" and deviate from the consensus established at previous UN climate change conferences. This effort included not just the proposal by the Danish conference chair, but also a larger undercurrent primarily among the Europeans advocating new legally binding commitments. The strategy of this group, [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN] asserted, was to drive a wedge in the developing country bloc between small states that are extremely vulnerable to climate change and the large developing countries. For example, [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN] said the small island states began to believe that if the BASIC countries continued to "refuse" the offer from the Europeans and developed countries, it would inevitably harm the island states' interests. To help reassure other developing countries, China promised not to avail itself of any of the funding promised by the developed countries.

17. (SBU) Although [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN] acknowledged that the UN consensus-based approach was not efficient in reaching an overall agreement, he said that the key was not the process itself but rather whether the developed world as a whole would fulfill its existing commitments to the UN climate change process and the roadmap that has been laid out since the early 1990s. Europe and others tried to deviate from the previous consensus that made the prospects for progress at Copenhagen much worse. The process is one thing, but it is clear that core members must have a dialogue and framework before the formal negotiations. [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN] was not clear on the most efficient makeup of a core group, but stressed that overcoming the gap in understanding between the developed and developing countries was essential.

LACK OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPERTS HURT CHINESE DELEGATION

18. (C) In response to reports that there was "tension" between the National Reform and Development Commission (NDRC) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) over the climate change negotiations, [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN] said it was a coordination problem between the two agencies, not tension. On climate policy, NDRC has the expertise and clear lead; however, MFA is the international affairs lead with the expertise in diplomacy. While NDRC's climate lead Xie Zhenhua might have been clear in articulating China's climate policy, he was not an expert in UN process or international negotiations. From the beginning, MFA should have

sent higher level officials to join Xie's climate group in the run-up to Copenhagen, said [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN]. He indicated that even Premier Wen Jiabao had not been fully empowered to strike a deal at Copenhagen on his own but would have had to consult with other (unspecified) members of the Chinese leadership.

COMMENT - CHINESE NOT EQUIPPED TO BARGAIN

19. (C) [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN], who followed multilateral issues closely [TEXT REMOVED BY AFTENPOSTEN], knows well Beijing's internal dynamic with respect to negotiations like those in Copenhagen. His comments suggest that the Chinese Government is institutionally ill-equipped to participate in the fast-moving, disorganized negotiating environment that characterized the Copenhagen discussions. Despite this, his observation that China's bottom line was clear well before the talks began indicates that a strong consensus had been established within China's leadership and bureaucracy that was difficult to change once the talks began.

110. (U) This report has been cleared by Embassy Beijing.
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